



Becoming You

The Key to Becoming a Leader

**BOOK
RAPPER**

Derived from : Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader*



Becoming You : The Key To Becoming a Leader

THE BOOK

Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader*

THE BIG IDEA

Most leadership courses and books fail to produce leaders because they focus on the wrong things. They treat leadership as if it's a thing to do, a means to an end. Instead, leadership is a side-effect, a by-product of a way of being. In particular, leadership occurs as a result of being fully expressed as a human being in the pursuit of something worthwhile.

SPEED RAP

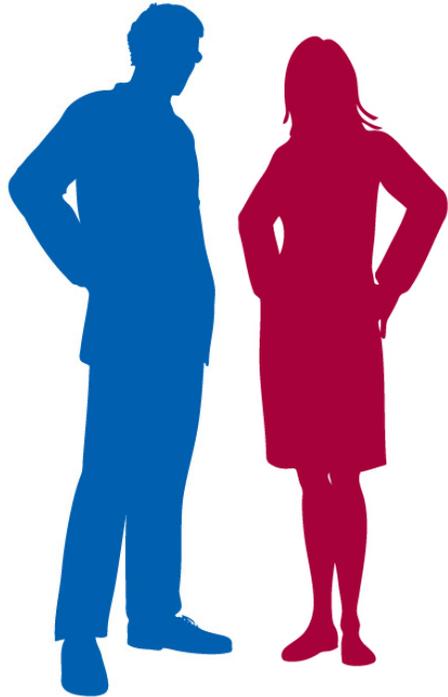
To become a leader follow the same path to become a fully functioning human being. It all starts with knowing yourself. Who are you? What are your strengths and weaknesses? Know what you want and how to engage others to help you fulfil that.

YOUR CHALLENGE

Stop! Take a moment. Look inside. And, ask yourself this basic question: Am I being all I can be? Answer honestly and you'll know what to do next.

Contents : Becoming You

Book Rapper Issues are not direct summaries of the books we review. We take what we consider to be the most important ideas from the book. We then re-package these key ideas so you can easily digest them in about 30 minutes. We also make it clear how you can take decisive action to benefit from these insights. In some parts we follow the book closely and in others we add our own models and interpretations. Given the **Book Rapper** Issue is much smaller than the book we may not cover each chapter. If you want more details than what's in this issue, we say '*buy the book*'.



BR Review : On Becoming a Leader **Context** : Leading with Social Media

RAP1 : Being a Leader

RAP2 : Mastering Your Context

RAP3 : The Leadership Switch

RAP4 : Four Competencies

RAP5 : Learning to Lead

RAP6 : Promoting Leadership

RAP7 : Leading the Future

More...

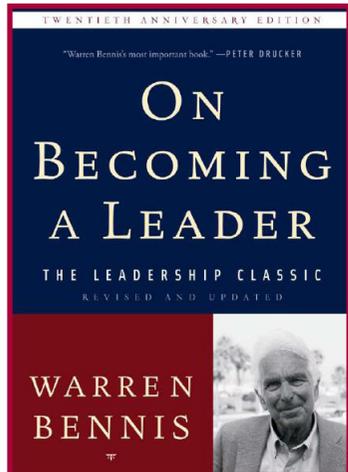
Note: Many comments in this issues are from people interviewed by Bennis. Whilst Bennis has quoted them directly, we haven't. And therefore, we've chosen not to reference each one of them.

BR Review : On Becoming a Leader

On Becoming a Leader

Warren Bennis

Basic Books, New York, Fourth Edition / 20th Anniversary Edition, 2009.



PRÉCIS

This book is about how! How people become leaders, how they lead, and how organisations encourage or stifle potential leaders.

FEATURES

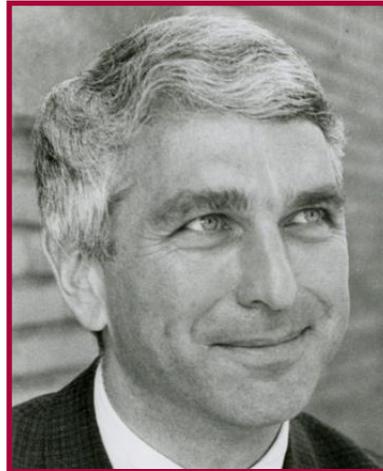
- It's based on a series of interviews with leaders from a wide range of pursuits.
- The Introductions and Epilogue provide a context of what's happening in the world today and the dearth of leadership.

BENEFITS

- This philosophy of leadership will provoke a personal response to your role as a leader across all areas of your life.
- Filled with stories, examples and tales to help you see leadership from multiple lenses.

WHO IT'S FOR

- Anyone wanting to be a leader in their life. It goes beyond leading an organisation.



WARREN BENNIS

- American leadership scholar, based at *University of Southern California*
- A leader of leadership gurus
- This book, *On Becoming a Leader* was originally published in 1989, it "lays the foundation that a leader must be authentic" (*Wikipedia*).
- The *Financial Times* called him "the professor who established leadership as a respectable academic field" (*Wikipedia*).
- Author of more than 30 books
- This photo of Bennis taken around the time the original book was published 1969 (source: his website)
- Author's Website
- Bennis on Wikipedia



BOOK RAPPER SAYS...

This book has forced me to question myself. Am I fully expressing myself? Not yet. It's time to up the game and take *Book Rapper* to another level.

BR Context : Leading with Social Media

Bennis starts his book with a chapter called *Mastering the Context*. And we decided to follow his lead by setting the context for this book. The original one was published in 1989. We consider its role in 2012.

For a long while, the West never really understood the East. Perhaps we still don't.

One of the most profound examples of this can be seen in the adoption of the Eastern art of meditation.

When seated meditation was first witnessed by Westerners it was met with bemusement.

To watch someone sit cross legged and not move for 30 minutes was starkly contrasted with the thought of watching a good game of football.

To state the obvious, someone who was meditating was clearly not doing anything. And, clearly, this missed the point of the exercise.

In recent times, meditation has become more popular in the West. It is widely and primarily promoted as a means to release stress.

In other words, it is promoted as a means to an end and not an end in itself. In the East, meditation is meditation. In the West, it is something you do to feel more relaxed.

Whilst greater calm is an admirable and desirable quality, the Buddhist view of meditation suggests any relaxation benefit is merely a side-effect.

The true benefit is to stop and reflect. Meditation is training for concentration, mindfulness and awareness. It is one pathway for unlocking new ways of being.

And, this is precisely the point that Bennis is making. In the West we have missed the point of leadership.

Leadership is not an end in itself. It is the side-effect of fully expressing yourself as you take action to fulfil something worthwhile.

Being fully self expressed implies creating your own sense of identity - another side-effect. And, when this is authentically expressed you'll naturally create your own pathway in the world.

This is the activation point of leadership available to all of us. It is born in the moment we choose to create our own path. Ironically, leadership is born when we choose not to follow others. At the least, to stop following them blindly.

Some of us accept the leadership challenge in fragments of our lives, yet too few take this on as their life's work.

For instance, being a leader as a parent and not in the community. Or being a leader at work and not at home. Or, being a leader in our studies and not in our health.

The West has missed this crucial insight into the origin of leadership on several counts.

The obvious lack of leadership highlights the problem. It is not so much that we admire so few corporate leaders or despair at the quality of our political candidates, it's that so few of us consider ourselves to be leaders in our own lives. And, yes, I'm talking to you!

Three glaring points stand out where we have missed the point on leadership.

One, that leadership occurs primarily in organisations. By definition, leaders require followers and it's easiest to find them in organisations. Unfortunately, this has cemented the view that authority determines leadership. Many wait to be promoted before showing up as a leader.

Two, that the most popular modes of organisation have been the military and the corporation. The military has a particular style of leadership that has become a dominant force. It's reliant on control, following orders and pushing authority.

Whilst the modern corporation is less like this, the learned culture of 'how to be a leader' has promoted few alternative role models.

BR Context : Leading with Social Media *continued...*

Three, the education of leadership has been turned into a commodity. Education is important. And, as Bennis suggests much of it is mere training disguised as education.

Instead of learning how to be a leader, we are taught to read about and talk about leadership. Useful and insufficient.

The good news about leadership is that this is all about change. As Bennis suggests, you need to know your context before you can lead it.

And, the context of leadership has changed because the context of organisations has changed.

The internet is the new, all pervasive model of our time for organisations.

It is the opposite of the hierarchy that shapes the military.

Instead, it is decentralised, nobody owns or controls it, it's open-ended, constantly changing and accessible by all.

And, this provides our entry into the art of being a leader through social media.

Social media is called social for a reason.

In the first instance, it means the democratisation of media. It's no longer in the control of the few, it's now in the palm of many as your smart phone and iPad.

And, it's social because we can all join in and interact with others.

Social media is the new leadership platform in the strict definition. It not only sets the tone for how to lead, it is the place where leadership is birthed and played out.

Authority and control does not work here as followers can leave in a single click.

Instead, you need to lead with an idea, a mission, a cause, a purpose, a vision.

Or as Bennis suggests, you lead by expressing yourself fully in the pursuit of something you deem worthwhile.

Others may naturally follow, and when they do, leadership is born.

How we engage our audience in the pursuit of our goals determines our success in fulfilling our purpose and therefore our performance as leaders.

Significantly, this is leadership outside the walls of formal organisations. This is also what Bennis is pointing to. Leadership is a natural human activity. It occurs whenever people decide to work together.

Bennis' book is both profound and lightweight.

It is profound for the time in which it was written. And, the paradigm shift it signals.

Little surprise it provoked the creation of the study of leadership, and Bennis as the leader of leaders.

And, with the unfair advantage of hindsight, reviewing this text 23 years later, it merely scratches the surface of a wide and deep chasm worthy of a lifetime's exploration.

The study of *being* is a potent pursuit. It is based around how we construct our worldviews, the role of the observer, managing conversations and emotions, plus how we use our physical body as a carrier of our way of being.

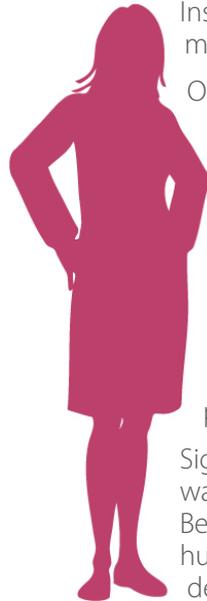
A tipping point for this book is possibly Bennis' connection with Werner Erhard, founder of EST. Bennis completed EST in 1979 and was later a consultant to Erhard. (1)

The EST conversation is about being. It is about self-expression. And, ultimately, it's about leadership.

Perhaps, this type of training is better suited to developing leaders rather than the academic version that feeds us today.

Bennis may have stumbled onto something way more significant than he imagined at the time. And, in our new world of social media his context of becoming a leader is becoming more and more important.

Reference : (1) http://vectorstudy.com/management_gurus/warren_bennis.htm



RAP1 : Being a Leader

PROFIT : Are you born a leader or not? Can you learn to be one? Here we look at what it takes in being a leader.

What is a Leader?

Mostly, we know leadership when we see it demonstrated.

Attempts to define these qualities merely end up offering a list of ideal traits and stories of those who have succeeded. Nice to know and not enough.

In the conversation of 'being a leader' everything shifts.

Becoming a leader is a life-long story of adult learning. A leader appears when they are willing to be themselves. And, since this is something that happens during our lives, leaders are therefore made and not born.

Further, they're made more by themselves than by any external means. It is precisely this responsibility, willingness and ability to conquer our circumstances that is the hallmark quality of a leader. There is by definition, no map to follow, no one pathway and no ultimate destination.

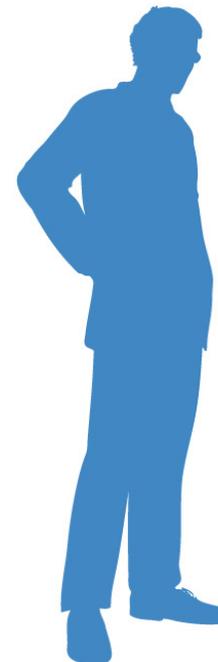
Leaders don't set out to be a leader. That smacks of power, force and ego. Rather a leader sets out to pursue a worthy goal and in doing so inspires others. Leadership is a side-effect of taking purposeful action.

Think of a time when you experienced leadership. What qualities defined this moment for you?

Are you being all that you can be? What's the purpose, mission or cause that you're willing to express yourself fully for?

Action : Are you a Leader?

Which of these qualities describe you?



NOT LEADING

- Born
- Surrender to context
- Prove yourself
- Driven
- Learned
- Fixed
- Destiny
- Talent
- Imitate
- Avoid Mistakes
- Status Quo
- Beige Character
- Reactive Self

LEADING

- Self-Made
- Master your context
- Express yourself
- Leading
- Learning
- Growing
- Capacity
- Talent + expression
- Original
- Learn from Failure
- Vision
- Distinct Character
- Invent Self



How would you rate yourself as a leader relative to these qualities?

RAP2 : Mastering Your Context

PROFIT : We are all born into a set of circumstances. Some more desirable than others. And, either way, it is our response to this context that matters. We can either surrender to it or master it. This is the key switch for turning on leadership. The willingness to fulfil your purpose - both individually and as an organisation - regardless of the starting point. Here we explore how to master your context.

Master Individual Context

Whilst we all have the capacity for leadership, not everyone will become a leader. Ultimately and intimately this is a choice we each make.

For those who don't make it, they have simply become a product of their context. They're expressing an unwillingness to develop their potential and share themselves.

This is not to say we should all become Prime Ministers, CEOs or Captains. Ultimately, this about free will. Do you want to be a prisoner to your habits, practices and beliefs or become the person you truly want to be?

Five Things to Know

- 1 Know who you are.
- 2 Know your strengths and weaknesses.
- 3 Know how to deploy your strengths and compensate for your weaknesses.
- 4 Know what others want, why they want it and how to communicate in order to gain their cooperation and support.
- 5 Know how to achieve their goals.



Master Organisational Context

We all inherit a set of forces that at times seem to conspire against our wishes. And this is magnified when you are a leader of an organisation because of the scale and complexity of the stakeholders involved.

In our rapidly changing world, a leader is like a sailor with a compass. We need to be able to learn from the world around us, the ebbs and flows of the tide, the positions of the underlying currents and the directions of the prevailing winds. Without this knowledge of our environment we are doomed to be at it's effect, instead of its master.

Four Steps To Follow

- 1 Become self-expressive - know how to be you and have the courage to be that.
- 2 Listen to your inner voice - Know when to trust it and be contrary to the voices around you.
- 3 Learn from the right mentors - this is a relationship dance of learning from and giving service to others.
- 4 Give oneself over to a guiding vision - this is the reason that has you stretch, learn and grow into the leader within you.



RAP3 : The Leadership Switch

PROFIT : The point at which we become leaders is tied to an identity shift. Generally, we make a declaration to ourselves to choose to be a leader. For some, this is the transition from Manager to Leader. Here, we explore how to switch on your leadership.



The Separation of Self

We become leaders in the precise moment that we stop thinking about how the world wants us to be. Instead, we decide to we start thinking about who we are and who we want to become. The ongoing leadership challenge then becomes to express more of yourself.

This Declaration of Independence is as symbolic for an individual as it is for the birth of a country.

There are two core motivations for this separation. Sometimes we don't like who we are so we seek a change. And sometimes, events demand more than we think we can give provoking growth and learning.

Ultimately, no one can teach you how to become yourself. It is a journey of self-discovery. And learning is experienced as a personal transformation, not a set of courses to pass or possessions to collect. In the end, we transform ourselves by learning to express ourselves in new ways.

Four lessons of self-knowledge

- 1 You are your own best teacher.
- 2 Accept responsibility for your own learning.
- 3 You can learn anything you want to learn.
- 4 True understanding comes from reflecting on your experience.

Action : Are you a Manager or a Leader?

Take the test and find out, score yourself out of 13.



MANAGER

Administers

A copy

Maintains

Focus on systems

Relies on control

Short range view

Ask how and when

Eye on bottom line

Imitates

Accepts status quo

Good soldier

Does things right

Surrenders to Context

LEADER

Innovates

An original

Develops

Focus on People

Inspires trust

Long range view

Ask what and why

Eye on horizon

Originates

Challenges it

Their own person

Does the right thing

Masters the Context

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------



What did you notice? Where can you learn and grow?

RAP4 : Four Competencies

PROFIT : What do skills and competencies do you need to be a leader? Bennis defines four essential qualities.



1 ENGAGE OTHERS

By definition, leaders lead other people. This requires engaging and persuading others by creating shared meaning around a common vision.

2 VOICE

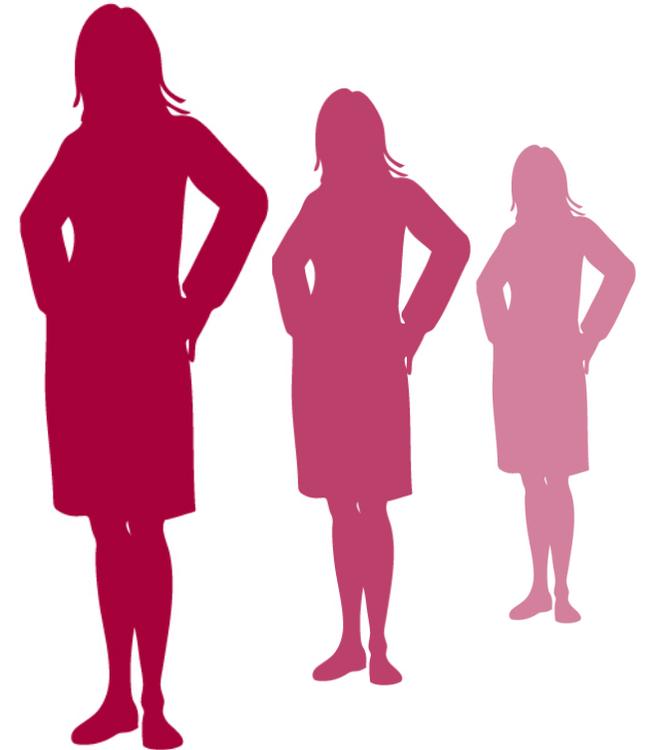
All authentic leaders have a distinctive voice that's built upon a combination of a clear sense of purpose, self-confidence, a strong sense of self and that cavalcade of abilities called 'emotional intelligence.'

3 INTEGRITY

When a leader fails we often see the invisible qualities that ensure a leader's success. A strong moral compass to do the right things is crucial. The critical context is a powerful belief in something outside of one's self and the willingness to serve that belief.

4 ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

This is the essential competency. It's an ability to respond quickly and intelligently to relentless change. This includes an ability to make decisions based on limited information and a resilience for when things don't go as planned. And, personally, over your career, the courage to reinvent yourself time after time.



Action : Rate Yourself

How good are you at each of these 4 competencies?

	1	2	3	4	5
Engage	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Voice	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Adaptive	<input type="checkbox"/>				

RAP5 : Learning to Lead

PROFIT : How do you learn to lead? Whilst formal education is crucial for developing expertise, it may not be the best way to develop leaders. Here we look at how you can learn to be a leader.

Four Life-Long Leadership Pursuits



Self-knowledge - The continuous process of reflecting on who we are and what is important to us shapes our context for decision making.

Codifying Your Thoughts - Being a thought leader through writing and speaking articulates who we are and what we believe.

Opportunities - The opportunity to lead is both a formal and informal item. At times we need the permission and authority to make things happen. And, at others we need the courage to make things happen because we believe in them.

Self-invention - Leaders are forged through overcoming obstacles which means overcoming our personal and organisational circumstances. And, in the process we expand our sense of self and create new capabilities.



Action : Rate Your Leadership Learning

Managers learn through training, leaders choose education. The intent and structure is different. Look at the list to the right. As an organisation check the qualities of your learning program to assess what you are *providing* - is it training or education? As a participant, check which qualities you are *receiving*.

Which areas offer the biggest opportunity to improve your leadership learning?

TRAINING

EDUCATION

Deductive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inductive
Firm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tentative
Static	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dynamic
Memorising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Understanding
Facts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ideas
Narrow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Broad
Surface	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deep
Rote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Experiential
Passive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Active
Content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Process
Tactics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy
Goal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alternatives
Prediction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exploration
Dogma	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Discovery
Reactive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Active
Direction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Initiative
Job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Life
Short-term	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long-term
Stability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change
Content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Form
Rigid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible
Rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk
Thesis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Synthesis
Closed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Open
Common Sense	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Imagination

RAP6 : Promoting Leadership

PROFIT : In our knowledge era, the primary resource of an organisation is it's people. And, to release that potential is the organisations true task. As your people grow, your organisation will naturally grow also. Here we take a look at the tasks of leaders and how to promote leadership in your organisation.

Action : Leadership tasks

Where are you at with these tasks? Are they in progress or do you need a hand?

- Define the organisation's mission
- Create a flexible environment that values people
- Reshape corporate culture - promote creativity, autonomy and continuous learning
- Build a network of autonomous units
- Encourage innovation, experimentation and risk taking
- Anticipate the future
- Make new connections between organisations and within the workforce
- Make new alliances outside the organisation
- Study the organisation from the inside and the outside
- Think globally
- Identify and respond to new needs in the work force
- Be proactive and comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity



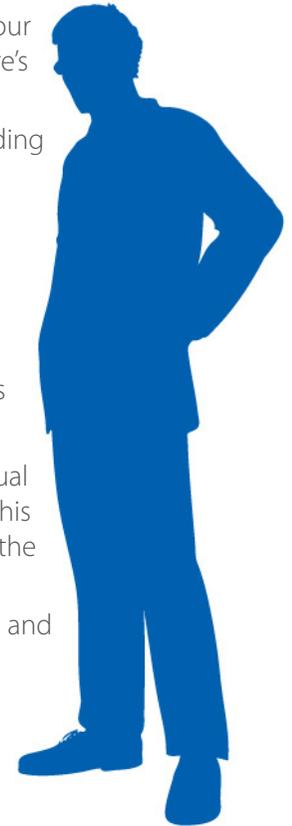
Opportunities for Leaders

One of the best ways to create a strong leadership ethic within your organisation is to create opportunities for people to step up and lead. Here's some suggestions...

- Ensure all team members become accustomed to leading by providing opportunities early in their careers and as often as possible.

Create leadership positions when you...

- Create specific projects
- Start new entities and business units
- Turn over small low-margin businesses to young managers
- Give emerging leaders a shot at turning around troubled business units
- Include potential leaders on teams for new ventures
- Provide leadership opportunities through working with individual customers. For instance, Avis has everyone serve on the customer desk. This allows each person to learn the business from the ground up and see the customers point of view through direct interaction.
- Rotate jobs to allow team members to take on different assignments and broaden their exposure to work challenges.



RAP7 : Leading the Future

PROFIT : By definition, a leader's role is future oriented. It's about ensuring the present circumstances are managed in such a way that the desired future becomes reality. Here we consider what you'll need to lead the future.

Ten Factors for the Future

- 1 Manage the Dream - Your first task as leader is to define the mission and then bring this into being.
- 2 Embrace error - Be strong enough to own your errors. The only mistake is to do nothing.
- 3 Encourage reflective back talk by fearlessly telling the truth.
- 4 Encourage dissent and contrary viewpoints - this is the organisational partner of point #3. Handpick some people to be the dissenter and the king's fool who challenges by jest.
- 5 Possess optimism, faith and hope. Remember, the leaders world view is always contagious.
- 6 Understand the Pygmalion Effect - as you see others so they will behave. Great performance starts with great expectations.
- 7 Gretzky Factor - Ice hockey legend Wayne Gretzky was famous for saying he 'skated to where the puck was going to be.' Your job is to know where the organisation must be if it is to grow.
- 8 See the long view and play with patience.
- 9 Understand stakeholder symmetry - balance the competing claims of all groups.
- 10 Create strategic alliances and partnerships - see the world through a collaboration and global lens.

Action : Are you ready?

Here's a list of qualities that will be needed by our next generation of leaders.

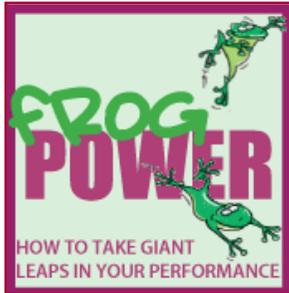
- Boundless curiosity and enthusiasm
- Belief in people and teamwork
- Devotion to long-term growth
- Commitment to excellence
- Willingness to take risks
- Contagious optimism
- Adaptive Capacity
- Broad education
- Authenticity
- Empathy
- Integrity
- Vision

**How many qualities do you currently possess?
Which ones will you need to develop?**

More...

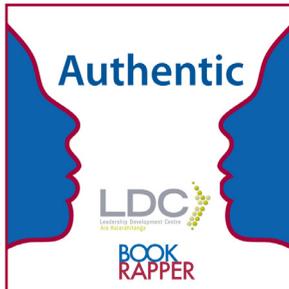
PROFIT : Want more? Here's some additional Book Rapper issues to consider. Want more than this? We suggest you buy the book! Or buy one of the many other books authored by Bennis.

OTHER BOOK RAPPER ISSUES



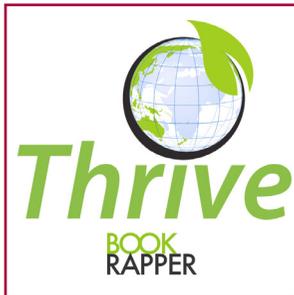
Frog Power

A look at the ontological or way of being conversation as applied to personal and organisational performance. This book is published as part of the Warren Bennis series on Leadership. Derived from: Steve Zaffron and Dave Logan, *The Three Laws of Performance*



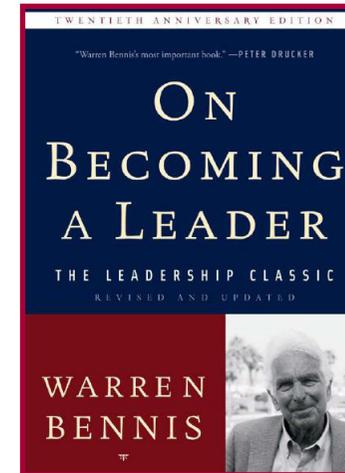
Authentic

Fully expressing yourself relies on being Authentic. And, that's the core message of Goffee and Jones in their book. Derived from: Goffee and Jones, *Why Should I Be Led By You*



Thrive

Adaptive Capacity is a key Bennis concept explored in depth in this book. Derived from: Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*



BUY THE BOOK

Buy *On Becoming a Leader* on Amazon

CREATE *Your* NEXT BIG THING



Geoff McDonald

Author of Book Rapper, eight books and international presenter. Geoff is a former architect who helps business experts and organisations create their next big thing.

Three ways we can help you create your next big thing...

BOOK RAPPER

Subscribe to Book Rapper to keep up to date and make informed decisions. Tap into the best business brains on the planet for your next big idea.
More...

PROJECT DONE

Use the latest Project Design thinking to bring your next big thing to life. For individuals or entire teams. Make it happen.
More...

SPEAKER PRESENTER

Expand the thinking of your organisation by exposing them to the big ideas in your industry. Presentation styles include face-to-face keynotes, online seminars or interactive meetings.
More...

SOME OF THE CLIENTS GEOFF HAS PRESENTED TO...



THE AMERICAN
INSTITUTE
OF ARCHITECTS

